NASA Takes Health Protective Measures

Monitoring from Start to Finish

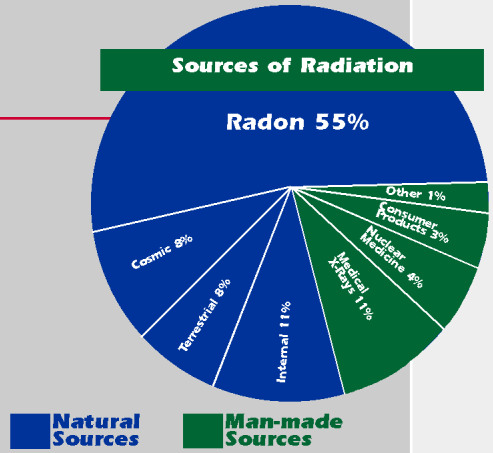
NASA conducted environmental monitoring while the Reactor Facility was in use and during the nearly 30 years since it closed. The commitment to monitoring air, water and sediment continues and was increased over the last year to provide a comprehensive environmental baseline. Environmental sampling will continue throughout decommissioning to ensure that radiation levels (estimated to be extremely low) are contained onsite and below levels set to protect the public, the workers and the environment.

Environmental sampling will continue throughout decommissioning

Well Below Regulatory Limits

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulates possible releases of isotopes (of which there are several hundred types) that might be released to air and water from all sources, including decommissioning. For example, limits are set to ensure that a person with continuous exposure to air for a year will have a total additional exposure of not more than 10 millirem. This is a safe level even when added to the 360 millirem that an average American receives annually.

All of us are exposed to radiation all the time. The average American receives about 360 millirems of radiation per year, most of it from naturally occurring sources - called background radiation.



NASA Toughens Already Stringent Air & Water Limits

NASA chose isotopes at the Reactor Facility site with the lowest NRC limits and set the detection level of its air and water monitors at 1/10th that limit, or at a level ten times more sensitive. NASA established these stringent limits for detection of even very, very low releases to investigate early on the cause of the elevated reading, and take prompt action if necessary.

Air monitor at fenceline.